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Swedish Council for Higher Education

The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) is a public agency that facilitates skills attainment for Sweden's current and future needs.

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Admission and entry requirements

There are general entry requirements for admission to doctoral (third-cycle) studies, but higher education institutions (HEIs) may also impose specific entry requirements if they consider them necessary.

To be admitted to doctoral studies, you must fulfil both the general entry requirements and any specific entry requirements placed by the HEI. You must also be assessed as having the ability to assimilate knowledge provided by the programme.

Positions and application

Doctoral positions are published directly on the university's website. You apply directly to the university if you wish to study at the doctoral/PhD level. There's no centralised application process.

[Studyinsweden.se](#) provides links to find a PhD position at a Swedish university

Please note that you cannot apply for doctoral positions on [Antagning.se](#) or [Universityadmissions.se](#).

The application process for doctoral studies differs between HEIs and applications are often submitted using a specific form. The departmental secretary or someone responsible for doctoral education can provide information about this.

General entry requirements

The general entry requirements for doctoral-level education are:

- a completed degree at Master's (second-cycle) level
- at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 are at Master's level, or
- generally equivalent knowledge acquired by other means, inside or outside Sweden.

Specific entry requirements

In addition to general entry requirements, each HEI may make specific entry requirements. These requirements vary greatly between the subjects and HEIs, and must be necessary for the student to be able to assimilate the knowledge provided. They may demand knowledge gained from higher education or equivalent professional experience, language skills or other demands.

Information about specific entry requirements is available in the general syllabus for each subject. Contact the department at which you want to conduct research if you would like to know more about specific entry requirements and other admission requirements.

Admissions

The majority of doctoral students continue to doctoral studies at the HEI where they received their Bachelor's degree. It is often suggested by a teacher who encourages the student to continue their academic career and who can perhaps even arrange financing as part of a research project.

If you apply for doctoral studies on your own initiative, it's a good idea to contact potential supervisors, researchers and doctoral students at the department you are interested in. This is important so that you can discuss your plans before submitting a formal application. You can form your own opinion about:

- how the programme is run
- potential projects
- student financing
- opportunities offered

There is no guarantee that the department you want to apply to has supervisors with the expertise in the subject in which you're interested, so it may be worth investigating what's on offer at other departments and HEIs — even abroad.

Licentiate degrees

Since 2002, it's been possible to admit applicants who intend to take a Licentiate degree after completing two years of doctoral studies. The intention of Licentiate degrees is primarily to increase opportunities for professionals to gain further qualifications.

There's nothing that prevents a person who has been admitted to a Licentiate degree programme from then applying to continue their education. On admission, the time taken for Licentiate studies is subtracted and employment as a doctoral student can be offered for the remaining period.

Financial requirements

A funding plan should normally be included with the doctoral studies application. On admission, the HEI assesses whether the applicant has guaranteed financing for the entire study period.

There are two main financing options. By far the most common is that the student is employed on a doctoral studentship or receives a doctoral grant. There are also other forms of financing, such as stipends, student grants or paid leave from another workplace. Doctoral students with this type of financing are often called part-time doctoral students, because it is common for these students to study part-time, i.e. at least half of full-time.

Students with other forms of financing may only be admitted if the HEI's assessment is that funding can be guaranteed for the entire study period and that the student can dedicate enough time to doctoral studies to complete them within four years (Licentiate degree) or eight years (doctoral degree).

Notification of doctoral studentships

When a position as a doctoral student — wholly or partly financed with the HEI's own funding — becomes available, the rules state that the post must be advertised or announced in a way that allows anyone who is interested to apply for the position before the deadline. Many HEIs also advertise externally funded positions.

The purpose of the rule is that the HEI's own students should not have an advantage. Exceptions to this rule can be made if a doctoral student is to undertake the programme as part of their job with an external employer.

Selection criteria

If there are more eligible applicants than the number of doctoral studentships, a selection is made based on an assessment of the applicant's ability to assimilate the knowledge provided by doctoral level education. An applicant who can be given credit for previous education or professional experience is not given any advantage during the selection process.

The basis for the assessment used during the selection process must be defined in the general syllabus for the subject. The HEI decides which basis for assessment will be applied. In practice, this means that applicants are assessed on the basis of educational performance, such as degree essays and projects. A ranking of applicants is easier if admission takes place on a particular date and not successively, when the department has available resources.

Application dates

Departments are increasingly introducing fixed application dates for programmes at doctoral level, but many still admit doctoral students successively during the semester. This occurs when there is enough external funding, supervisory capacity, vacant doctoral studentships or when applications arrive from students with other funding.

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